



NEWS RELEASE 24-21

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SOUTHWEST FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT INTRODUCES NEW THERAPY DOG PROGRAM

FORT MYERS, Fla. (Oct. 17, 2024) – Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) is pleased to announce the start of a new K-9 therapy program called WOOF@RSW. “Watching Over Our Friends” @RSW is in partnership with Therapy K-9’s of Southwest Florida. The certified therapy dog teams will spend time greeting airport guests who need some extra care or offer a friendly paw to shake and help them on their way.

“Traveling can be overwhelming and stressful, especially when navigating busy airports. This program shows we care about our airport guests and want to help make their journey calmer and a little more fun,” said Steven C. Hennigan, C.M., A.C.E., executive director and CEO of the Lee County Port Authority. “People love animals and we have seen firsthand the smiles and wagging tails when our four-legged friends interact with travelers, employees and airport visitors at RSW.”

WOOF@RSW is part of our continuing efforts to enhance the customer experience at Southwest Florida International Airport and our furry WOOF ambassadors will be at the airport on a bi-monthly basis to start. Airport visitors will be able to spot the K-9 therapy handlers in blue shirts and the dogs in blue vests that say, “Please Pet Me,” both branded with a WOOF@RSW logo. At this time, K-9 teams will be located pre-security and wander throughout the terminal in public areas.

Therapy K-9’s of Southwest Florida began in 2016 as a networking group for certified therapy dog teams to find locations for needed services in Charlotte, Collier and Lee counties. They have introduced teams at airports, schools, nursing homes, hospitals and libraries. All the current airport teams are volunteers, have spent at least five years performing therapy work and are certified through the Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD). For more information on Therapy K-9’s of Southwest Florida, please visit their [Facebook page](#). Members must meet annual testing and health requirements, both for the handler and the canine. For more information, please visit [Alliance of Therapy Dogs](#).

Southwest Florida International Airport, located in Fort Myers, Florida, served more than 10 million passengers in 2023 and is one of the top 50 U.S. airports for passenger traffic. No ad valorem (property) taxes are used for airport operation or construction. For more information, visit flylcpa.com or facebook.com/flyRSW.